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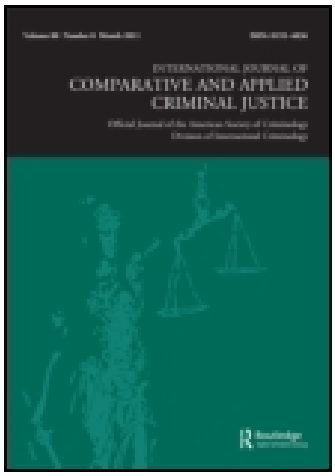

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The peruvian hostage crisis: Brief review of MRTA

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The Peruvian Hostage Crisis: Brief Review of MRTA

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Generally speaking, the Latin American guerrilla movement accepted and followed the model developed by Fidel Castro in his successful actions in the Cuban Revolution. The guerrilla movement in Peru also was born of this line. Now the guerrilla movement, including Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) and Tupac Amarú Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amarú : MRTA), is one of the major threats to the existing political system in Peru. The name is taken from Tupac Amarú, the last Inca who struggled against Spain in the sixteenth century, and from an Indian leader who organized a large revolutionary force in the 1780s in opposition to the Spanish colonial system.

MRTA is an urban-based revolutionary movement that became active in the mid-1980s and has used political and military means — such as bombings, kidnappings, ambushes and assassinations — to achieve its aim of ridding Peru of imperialism and establishing a Marxist regime, in combination with a program of José Carlos Mariátegui, who adapted the Marxist theory to Peruvian conditions. Recent activity of MRTA has remarkably slowed down owing to defections and the government's successful counter-terrorist measures.

Nevertheless, MRTA, armed with automatic weapons and grenade launchers, attacked the Japanese ambassador's residence and threatened to kill several high-ranking hostages. Their direct motive was in the release of their colleagues from jail. But many observers viewed that the Peruvian situation, represented by politico-economic inequality, was the background of the crisis: concentration of economic riches and blockade of popular demands, at the nationwide level. Although talks with Tupacamarist guerrilla are now under consideration, the hostage crisis of Lima shows that there still exists a serious social bipolarization in Peru, between ''Peru of the Andes'' and ''Peru of Lima.''

Introduction

The hostage crisis perpetrated by Movement Revolutionary Tupac Amarú (MRTA) in the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima, Peru left a vivid footprint in the history of Latin American terrorism. Terrorism experienced by most Latin American countries for the past 30 years has undergone changes in the pattern and frequency according to individual country's political, social and economic situations. But since terrorism in Latin America became the focus of concern as a serious political and social issue, terrorist outrages have been at a standstill up until recent days.[1] Despite the lull, however, Tupac Amarú rebels' attack on the Japanese ambassador's residence in Peru was an obvious evidence proving the ''existence of guerrilla movement'' in Latin American countries, including Peru.

In April 1966, the U.S. government established the *Comprehensive Anti-Terrorism Act* in its effort to facilitate ferreting out terrorists and enable great-

er punishment of them. Additionally, the U.S. legislature has passed the Helms Burton bill that is calling for a blocking of Cuba, a traditional supporter of terrorism in Latin America, essentially by isolating it from the world. As a move to counter this anti-Cuban measure, Castro tried to improve diplomatic relations with the Vatican and join various international organizations, including the Summit Talks of Latin American Countries (Cumbre Iberoamericana).[2] Due to growth of anti-government forces and the split of the ruling block into factions, the 60-year ruling system has begun to shake and political, social unrests have become tense. The new president of Guatemala, Albaroarsu, signed a peace pact with anti-government rebels to end the 36-year civil war. Because of its scandal involving presidential election funds, the Colombian government found itself in a state of serious political instability. President Ssampper was in conflict with the Congress and was almost pushed out of office on charges of receiving election funds from a drug cartel during his presidential election campaign.

In Peru, President Hujimori, in his effort to rescue Peru from its underdeveloped state, tried to strengthen diplomatic relations with advanced countries as soon as he was elected president. On Christmas eve in 1996, leftist guerrilla rebels attacked the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima, Peru, where the Japanese ambassador and guests were commemorating the birth of their Emperor. The rebels held about 300 guests, including foreign diplomats, as hostages. The news of this attack shocked not only Peru but also the rest of the world and attracted worldwide attention in the sense that guerrilla movements in Latin America, which had been believed to be weakened or eliminated, were reborn.

In this paper, the realistic significance of Peruvian guerrilla movements will be reviewed by examining the formation, ideology and activities of Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amarú (MRTA), the perpetrator of the hostage crisis in the Japanese ambassador's residence in Peru. For this study, data reported through media and other information on this Peruvian hostage crisis will be analyzed based on related domestic and overseas literature.[3]

Ideological Background of Latin American Terrorism and the Formation of MRTA

Ideological Background

Most members of the Latin American terrorist groups are from the upper and middle classes, and their footholds are in college and high schools. Ironically, however, they claim that they represent grass roots, such as laborers and farmers, and struggle against domestic and foreign oppressors and exploiters.[4] Generally speaking, Latin America's urban guerrilla groups have different political, ideological backgrounds, including Stalinists, Mao Tse-tung followers, Trotskyists and Peronists. What the leftist revolutionary group needed was a theory justifying the group's claim that Latin America was well prepared for

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a socialist revolution. From this background emerged the neo-Marxism dependence theory, a new theory arising from Marxism. This neo-Marxism dependence theory, which justifies armed revolutionary campaigns, appeared in the late 1960s when urban guerrilla warfare, as a new stage of guerrilla movements, was beginning to rise while rural guerrilla warfare was disappearing after many years of toil. The Cuban revolution was an example showing the possibility that a few revolutionary groups in Latin America could seize power through guerrilla wars in rural areas without urban proletarian aids. The Cuban success, however, did not have any immediate effect on laborers and farmers of other Latin-American countries. It did, however, help bring forth the radical college-based new left forces. Most ideologies prevailing across the Latin American region have been introduced from outside of the continent, and of these ideologies, many were affected by neo-Marxist books from North America. Andre Gunder Frank had the strongest effect on the dependence theory through his books. According to this theory, in the capitalist system, foreign investments do not provide any benefits to the country in which such investments are made; rather, such an investment is nothing but a tool used in taking economic surplus from satellite countries to the central country — the investor country. Inside the satellite countries or adjacent ones, this cycle is applied in the same way. Economic surplus attained in rural areas is moved to industrialized areas so that these industrialized areas can play the central role of the state. The only way a dependent country can escape from this adverse cycle is to rid itself of the capitalist system. Likewise, the only way Latin America can overcome underdevelopment is to achieve socialist progress through armed revolutions. While traditional Marx-Leninism claims that the human history goes through the development process of feudalism→capitalism→socialism, neo-Marxism theorists, like Trank, rebuke application of such views to Latin America. They argue that the stage of feudalism did not exist in Latin America by seeing that occupation of Latin America by Spain and Portugal was the result of mercantilist capitalism that had nothing to do with feudalism. With this kind of ideological background, Latin-American students and some intellects have continued to struggle in their efforts to topple the inefficient, corrupt bureaucratic system. Most young Latin American revolutionists do not trust the traditional communist party, which pursues proletarian revolution through progressive reforms. There are two types of revolutionary ideologies in Latin America: one sees rural areas as the center of revolution, whereas the other sees urban areas as the center of revolution. These two positions agree, however, that the main enemies of their revolution are U.S. imperialism, landowners and the rich bourgeois.

Cuban Revolution and Latin American Guerrilla Movements

It is not easy to define the concept of guerrilla in a general way. The first reason is that guerrilla movements have various types and patterns depending on times and places. This diversity in types and patterns makes generalization

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of guerrilla movements difficult. Besides, most studies on guerrilla movements, especially in Latin America, have been conducted by military experts or guerrilla leaders based on their empirical views; and not so many studies have been conducted using theoretical and analytic approaches from neutral position. Consequently, this difference in approaches is another factor making it difficult to define the concept of any guerrilla movement. In other words, guerrilla movements can not be defined in a unanimous way.

Despite this diversity in definition, the term ''guerrilla'' is generally defined as a warfare carried out by small-scale militant group in the conflict between regular and non-regular soldiers, making use of tactics other than an all-out war; or a unit composed of such militants. The purpose of guerrilla movement is to remove the existing system and to liberalize the grass roots socially and politically. As case studies conducted in many regions reveal, guerrilla movements usually occur in areas where social justice is hard to find and the people strongly long for a change. Success or failure of guerrilla movement depends on continuity of the struggle supported by the grass roots, because only this can isolate the government morally and politically from the people and the international society.[5]

Due to this political nature of guerrilla warfare, the concept of such wars is considered to be political rather than military. In other words, the old definition of guerrilla movements which was made in a military concept, has been altered to reflect more politics these days.

The guerrilla movements in Latin America carry such political purposes in them. Terms referring to the guerrilla movements in Latin America are as diverse as the numerous types of the movements carried out in various parts of the region. The terms include armed anti-government revels, leftist guerrilla revels, terrorist groups, communist guerrilla forces, farmers or city guerrilla groups and anti-government guerrillas. The terms referring to the guerrilla movements in Latin America vary depending on the types of central forces, ideologies, strategies and tactics. Since guerrilla warfare, in comparison with regular one, has strategic advantages in that it can save human and material resources as much as possible, not to mention war costs, it was popular in many Latin American areas even before the Cuban revolution. However, the birth of Latin American guerrilla movement in its modern meaning[6] carrying so many names came after the Cuban revolution. Therefore, it is natural for all types of guerrilla movements in Latin American countries to take the Cuban revolution, which succeeded in taking power through guerrilla warfare, as their model. Castro's guerrilla theory greatly affected Latin American guerrilla movements because ''it reflects political, social characteristics of Latin America. His theory emphasizes the necessity of guerrilla warfare as a plausible means to fight the dictatorship and come into political power. His theory also asserts that Latin America should base its movements in rural areas because conditions needed to achieve successful guerrilla movements by urban proletarians are not fully met.''[7]

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In his book *Guerrilla Warfare*, known as a classic guerrilla warfare handbook, Che Guevara mentions effects of the Cuban revolution on Latin American guerrilla movements. ''I think that the Cuban revolution left three basic precepts for revolutionary movements in Latin America: first, civil forces win wars against military power; second, it is not necessary to wait until all conditions are met for a revolution; and third, the rural area is an essential region for armed warfare in underdeveloped Latin America.''[8] These precepts of the Cuban revolution have since systematically developed into a ''foco theory,'' a guerrilla tactic. This theory proposes that it is ideal for guerrilla warfare in Latin America to start after forming a foco in non-city areas. Along with this rural foco theory, the use of urban terrorism as an early stage of the socialist revolution is seen as another model of Latin American guerrilla movement. This type of guerrilla movement — which can be called a city-type guerrilla movement — was vigorously applied in Latin American countries encouraged by the success of the Cuban revolution. The city-type movement theory contends that legitimacy of the government can be destroyed by selective use of forces against capitalist institutions, like banks and foreign corporations, the army and the police. The theory also stresses that terrorist acts against citizens must be minimized in order to secure people's support.[9] The rural and city guerrilla movements in Latin America, which became full-scale due to the effects of the Cuban revolution, were applied and tested in all areas of Latin America during the '70s-'80s, but no country except Nicaragua achieved the goal of holding power. In most countries, guerrilla groups remained as small anti-government groups or were eliminated by government forces.

Recently, some were incorporated into the existing political institutions through negotiations with the government. The backward trend of Latin American guerrilla movements, including those in Peru, resulted from the U.S.'s active support of anti-guerrilla policies of Latin American countries and the failure in securing politically supportive power in both rural and urban areas. In addition, imprudent terrorist behaviors negatively appealed to the people for winning their support and encouragement. Moreover, the socialist systems in the Soviet Union and in the Eastern Europe collapsed at the end of the 1980s, and Castro the administration in Cuba, which had been anticipated to be the alternative type of regime for Latin American countries trying to escape from dependency and underdevelopment, came to face a crisis due to the blockade initiated by the U.S. and other Western countries. As a result, Latin American guerrilla movements had to wane as well. Authoritarian military government disappeared from the political stages in Latin American countries, including Peru, and new civil governments obtained their legitimacy through elections. This transformation of political power made legitimacy of resistance and uprisings of guerrilla groups even weaker, which consequently caused a further decline of guerrilla movements in the region.

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Formation of MRTA and Tupac Amarú

Despite the conspicuous decline of guerrilla movements in Latin America in the early 1990s, Latin American guerrilla groups are beginning to resume their activities as economic reforms implemented by civil governments could not solve the chronic rich-poor gap. In Mexico, new leftist guerrilla groups, EZLN and EPR, emerged and have been unfolding their anti-government activities. Appearance of anti-government revels in Mexico was very surprising in view of the fact that no anti-government groups have shown their existence with explicit military activities since the Mexican revolution in 1910.

FARC is expanding its power in 600 out of Columbia's total 1024 counties; in August last year, it attacked a military base and took about 60 soldiers as hostages. It solidified its anti-government activities by recruiting coca farmers when the government started intensified clean-up operations in the cocaine producing areas, its major source of funds. Rejecting negotiations with the government, it is strengthening its violent acts. In Chile, MIR, a rebel group, is actively engaged in anti-government activities in conjunction with guerrilla groups in Peru. The birth of Peru guerrilla movements, including MRTA, was also caused by revolts from low-income classes angered by unbalanced distribution of wealth.

Guerrilla movements in Peru were formed taking advantage of the people's worries and overt complaints under chaotic political, economic circumstances resulting from such adversities as high inflation, failure of price stabilization, failed strategies to foster import substituting industries, inconsistence of economic policies in nationalization and privatization, highly accumulated deficits and drop of international prices of Peru's export items. Sendero Luminoso, the representative, extremely leftist Latin American anti-government group advocating Maoism, initiated its first violent act in 1980. MRTA, which recently attacked the Japanese ambassador's residence in Peru, publicly announced its existence by founding Ejército Popular Tupacamarista (EPT), an armed organization, in 1984 with Marx-Leninism as its main principle.[10] Later, guerrilla movements in Peru were mainly guided by these two groups, and about 30,000 were killed in anti-U.S. and anti-foreign power terrorist acts until leaders of these two groups were arrested during the government's counter-guerrilla operations in the early 1990s.

In addition to these politico-economic conditions, the geographical position of Peru are also closely related to formation of guerrilla groups. Guerrilla organizations' activities, in general, are initiated and carried out under the circumstances in which the government's regular soldiers cannot simultaneously and continuously control entire areas susceptible to guerrilla activities. These circumstances are created when the government's military force is too weak to seize the entire land, regardless of the strength of guerrilla groups' force, or when the government's army cannot control certain areas because it is geographically too difficult for them to access the areas. The land of Peru consists of 3 regions: the coastal area, the economic and political center, the

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Andes mountainous region, where more than half of the total population are living, and the jungle region in the east.[11] Because of these geopolitical characteristics, not only inter-regional but also intra-regional transportation and communication networks lag far behind. These characteristics are the major causes of regional gaps in terms of politico-economic development level. This has also become an obstacle to the national-level development, making economic and social integration difficult as well. By using these geographical conditions, guerrilla groups could expand their territories rather easily.

Generally, oligarchic rule, unemployment and poverty due to economic stagnation, concentration of population in cities, confusion in the sense of values and the stagnant bureaucratic structure form the background of guerrilla movements. However, to understand guerrilla movements in Peru and other Latin American countries, political, cultural, historical and social factors indigenous to the region must be taken into account.[12] Peru has the history of repeated revolts and uprisings against the Spanish colonial government, and after its liberation from the Spanish control, it adopted radical ideologies and achieved rapid development. Tupac Amarú respected by MRTA was the last leader of the Inca period, who fought against Spain in the 16th century and led the revival of the Inca Empire. He led independence movements in Bilcabamba by taking advantage of the weakened ruling power in Spain, but he was defeated by Spanish soldiers in 1572. Since then, revolts against the Spanish colonial control continued in Peru. In 1780, King Guirior's imposition of heavy taxes, forced labor and land despoliation drove native tribes to make open resistances, and the rebellion led by Jos Gabriel Condorcanqui broke out and spread across the entire country. He called himself Amarú II, presenting himself as a descent of Inca tribes. Pleading for the restoration of the Inca system, he drove the entire country into an anarchical state. In spite of the defeat of the rebel force and his death by the King's army, it took a long time to completely quell the rebellion. Native tribes' resistance to the Spanish colonial control was erupted only in some areas and suppressed within a short time by the King's army. However, Tupac Amarú's resistance continued until 1782 and developed into nationwide resistance, covering the central and northern Andes regions. As a result, Spanish Kingdom used appeasement policies, such as reduction of taxes and prohibition of land pillage.[13] Consequently, Tupac Amarú has become the ideological symbol of resistance by the controlled to the controller.

Ideology and Terrorism of MRTA

Ideology and Thought of MRTA

How much support guerrilla groups gain from the people and how much the groups affect the people depend on many factors, such as political doctrines adopted by guerrilla groups for criticizing social injustice, military superiority over government forces, terrorist acts and pacification and instiga-

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tion activities. Among these factors, guiding ideologies and thoughts adopted by guerrilla movements play the most important role. Nothing has been clearly known in relation to MRTA's ideological lines. Until the East Block collapsed at the end of the 1980s, almost all of the major ideologies and lines adopted by left and extremely radical movements in Peru and other Latin American countries were based on radical ideologies, such as Marx-Leninism, anarchism, Maoism, Castroism, liberation theology and dependence theory.

Judging from their pro-Cuban inclination, MRTA is presumed to pursue anti-American ideologies and anti-imperialism, generally advocated by leftist guerrillas in Latin America. Víctor Polay Campos, who majored in sociology when he studied in France and founded MRTA, is also a Marx-Leninist influenced by Che Guevara, who led the Cuban revolution with Castro. Denying capitalist system internally and advocating anti-imperialism externally, these people plead for the establishment of a communist government run by laborers and farmers.[14] MRTA shows a relatively flexible position to the Latin American guerrilla groups' abandonment of armed anti-government resistances in recent days. It once mentioned that anti-government guerrillas in Guatemala and El Salvador chose the best way under the given circumstances. However, it claims that guerrilla revolt based on Marx-Leninism is plausible in Peru at the present stage. According to MRTA, there is a current need in Peru to expand the general sympathy for a revolution, and this can only be achieved through establishment of a people-based anti-government group through organized armed activities.[15] All these positions help one understand that MRTA perceives the armed guerrilla campaign as the ''groundwork'' necessary for establishing a government based on the leftist ideology.

Differences in the regional culture or history and ideological backgrounds in addition to similarities of Latin American guerrilla movements must be used as objects of analysis in order to understand each country's guerrilla movements. From this perspective, the ideology of José Carlos Mariátegui, the indigenous Peru ideologist, can be seen as an ''ideological common denominator'' that affected MRTA, Sendero Luminoso and Peru leftist movements, including the Peru communist party. Mariátegui, favoring revolutionary socialism, is the ideologist who applied Marxism to the Peruvian situations. His ideology sees the organized collaboration among laborers', native people's and students' movements as a prerequisite for expelling imperialism from Peru. He argued that the Inca society prior to the Spanish occupancy was a typical model of the primitive socialist society and the first American communist society. He also stressed the revival of native tribes' cultures as a pivotal power for social reforms. The reasons he is called as a socialist not ''in Latin America'' but ''of Latin America'' and his ideology is called as Peruvian socialism or Mariátegui socialism are found exactly here.[16]

Considering the fact that Latin America is a region of mestizos in terms of identity and blood, the ideology of Mariátegui must be absolutely adopted although it is symbolic in guerrilla movements, including MRTA, in Peru. The legitimacy of the argument is proved by its frequent citation and adaptation in

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almost all Peruvian leftist groups' principles and declarations. MRTA's ideological lines for the establishment of a socialistic government based on anti-foreign power and anti-imperialism does not show any significant difference from those of Sendero Luminoso. Despite no difference in lines, the relationship between these two groups is antagonistic rather than cooperative, which can be seen as a profound irony. These two groups kept friendly relations in resistance to the government up to the mid 1980s. However, as ''Sendero Luminoso'' began to take too many radical terrorist acts and had a close relationship with drug traffickers, MRTA denounced it by calling it a group of ''uncontrolled terrorists'' adhering to the ideas of impractical Maoism, idealism and the construction of rural society, blaming it for using ''irrational violence.'' In the same manner, Sendero Luminoso attacked MRTA, denouncing it by calling it the ''armed reformist'' or the ''traitor.''[17] Conflicts between the two groups originated from differences in their measures and means, that is to say, terrorist acts, for achieving their goals, rather than from different ideologies or lines.

Terrorism and MRTA

Latin American guerrilla organizations, including MRTA, and their activities can be understood in connection with the general conception of terror or terrorism, because they use terrorist acts as their means in pursuit of their aims.

Generally, the term ''terror'' or ''terrorism'' is defined as the use of violence, such as robbery, threats and other forceful actions, causing terror in a certain individual or group to induce changes in their behaviors or attitudes in an effort to achieve certain political purposes.[18] However, terrorism bears many patterns depending on places and times terrorist acts occur, making it difficult to define in a generalized way, like the definition of guerrilla movement.

The concept of terrorism is also interpreted in a quite different way according to the relation between the subject and the object. In some cases, terrorism is used as a means by the controller or controlling group to maintain his or its power, while terrorist acts are sometimes used by special groups to topple the existing controlling group. In Peru and other Latin American countries, terrorism is also applied in two ways. One way refers to the organized violent activities used by the government against anti-state or anti-government groups, and the other way refers to overall violent means used by guerrilla groups to fight against the government. In the latter case where terrorism is adopted for anti-government campaigns, Latin American guerrillas choose terrorist raids as a vehicle to carry out guerrilla warfare and see terrorism as a preparation stage for a guerrilla war to be performed when weapons and organization are fully ready. This way of using terrorism implies that terrorism is regarded as one of the means, not the end, used by guerrillas in Latin America.

MRTA also adopts terrorism as one of the violent means taken to fulfill special purposes. It once revealed activities being taken by its members in many ways, including anti-government instigation and propagation, labor union movements, social movements and terrorist acts.[19]

It is not possible to provide a definite format to explain members and social backgrounds of guerrilla groups using terrorism. However, the ruling body is generally made up of law-related professionals, doctors, teachers and high-ranking soldiers coming from upper or middle class families. Because knowledge and intelligence are required for planning and propagating terrorist campaigns, most of them are college graduates or students and are familiar enough with both rightist and leftist ideologies to be flexible according to the groups' lines. Most male members are unmarried, and most females are young and attractive.[20] As the facts that Victor Poly Campos, the founder of MRTA, studied sociology in Europe and Ibimael Gusman of Sendero Luminoso was a philosophy professor suggest, most core members of MRTA were born in middle- and upper-class families and received college education. These members are also good at pacification work and apply ''Robin Hood'' tactics to increase their supporters in number by distributing food stolen from the government to the poor. These people are also master hands in psychological warfare; most of the hostages once captivated and freed by them said that they were well treated and were not threatened. MRTA's terrorist acts are not greatly different from those of other terrorist groups: bombings, assassinations, kidnaps and sudden raids. Sometimes, it abducts domestic or foreign businessmen and requests ransoms. There also are uses of weapons by soldiers. According to the report by Peruvian Human Rights Committee, 8.6% of the total terrorist acts committed in 1994 was perpetrated by MRTA. In comparison with Sendero Luminoso, however, MRTA has shown less radical activities. The International Amnesty Committee reported that of the 26,000 people who were killed in terrorist activities between 1980 and 1992, MRTA was responsible for 1%, Sendero Luminoso for 45% and the government for the remaining 53%.[21]

As its past terrorism record shows, MRTA chooses terrorism as a way of their major activities but does not show radicality in them. However, its latent danger is larger than Sendero Luminoso, who acts mainly in rural areas, because MRTA is a leftist organization dependent upon urban guerrilla activities. Generally, bases of guerrilla groups are located in mountains or the jungle because guerrillas fighting against the regular soldiers can easily hide themselves in such areas. These areas are mostly underdeveloped and lack communication services, so the ruling government can hardly extend its political power to such isolated regions.

If guerrilla movements secure a certain level of political power helped by the people's support, the significance of the base is somewhat lost.[22] Nevertheless, a base is essential for guerrillas to be able to set up plans, drill members and develop their overall activities. MRTA does not reveal its bases for guerrilla activities, but in view of the fact that its terrorist acts were often commit-

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ted in cities it is presumed that it had small-sized bases spread over non-rural areas in its beginning stage. This presents a striking contrast to Sendero Luminoso's concentration of its military bases in Ayacucho. According to MRTA, ''Sendero Luminoso'' made a compromise with the government after Hujimori administration's hostage rescue mission, and its many parts have been disintegrated by internal splits between the hard-line and mild-line factions. On the contrary, however, MRTA decided to withdraw itself from the government's counter-guerrilla warfare as a military tactic and set up its focos in rural areas located in the central jungle area. It also disclosed that in other areas, it has its command teams drilling civilian soldiers recruited from farmers and city laborers.[23] From this it can be assumed that MRTA is reattempting to march to cities with its focos in rural areas. In other words, in urban and rural focos, full-time guerrillas try to expand their organization's forces by recruiting part-time guerrillas who work for a living during the day and turn to fighting warriors at night. Target individuals or organizations of guerrillas are generally associated with the ruling block directly or indirectly. Sometimes, however, it perpetrates terrorist acts against non-supportive areas and residents for punishment or revenge. In this case, guerrillas tend to rely on minimum use of weapons taking the facts into account that their military powers are inferior to regular soldiers and that people may withdraw their support in fear of terrorism.[24] In Peru, major targets of MRTA were bankers, businessmen and foreigners. This is attributed to MRTA's inferiority in its organization and weaponry and is not irrelevant to the domestic and overseas criticism on Sendero Luminoso's radical terrorism. MRTA's behaviors during the occupation of the Japanese ambassador's residence can be understood in this context. MRTA showed a striking contrast to Sendero Luminoso's indiscriminating retaliatory actions to non-supportive residents in their territory. In other words, MRTA pays careful attention in selecting targets of its terrorism. Funds and weapons used for terrorism are supplied from outsiders or provided through criminal means. MRTA has raised funds mainly by kidnapping foreigners or robbing banks and foreign companies in cities at night. This has been confirmed by the fact that it requested Japanese companies, for which Japanese hostages worked, their ransoms during the captivity of hostages in the Japanese ambassador's residence as well as in past abduction cases. Since Peru is a major cocaine producer in Latin America, MRTA is also presumed to be connected with drug cartels for its funds. External assistance has not been known so far, but its connection with ELN, a Bolivian rebel group and with MIR,[25] a Chilean anti-government group, has been continuously suspected. Terrorist groups have many routes for supply of material and human resources. MRTA recruits and drills young people coming from urban and rural areas who show positive attitudes toward leftist ideologies affected by some student groups centering on San Martin University, a state-run school, and lower organizations of the Peruvian Communist Party who help rebel groups arm themselves with strong spirit.[26]

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MRTA is maximumly utilizing pacification and instigation along with terrorist acts in fulfilling its goals. It is very interesting that MRTA focuses on mass media play through the Internet. Main contents of its home page and related sites deal with the government's human rights violation and failed economic policies. According to information provided by MRTA in the Internet, about 300 MRTA members have been receiving inhuman treatments in prison in Peru, and it regarded the imprisonment of hostages in the Japanese ambassador's residence was a successful chance to make the serious human rights violations in Peru known to the world.[27] As confirmed by Peru's MRTA and Mexico's EZLN, new information channels appearing as a result of the progress in information and communication technologies are expected to be used as an important means for Latin American guerrilla movements in the future.

The number of MRTA's members once reached 1000-1500, but its power has been rapidly weakened since the arrest of its founder and leader Victor Poly Campos in June 1992 and other leaders' arrests or surrenders to the government. Frequent terrorist acts in urban and rural areas in Peru have been remarkably reduced as MRTA and Sendero Luminoso have lost their power. Terrorist activities in urban areas, in particular, greatly decreased in number. In 1995, only 2 car bombings were recorded as terrorist acts in urban areas, and the remaining acts occurred mainly in Huallaga, a valley area, which is a major cocaine farming area and the base of Sendero Luminoso.[28] The current number of MRTA members is estimated to be about 200-500, and those who went to mountainous jungle areas to hide themselves are known to seek reconstruction of their organization.

Causes and Lessons of the Peruvian Hostage Crisis

Many approaches and theories can possibly be applied to investigate causes of the recent hostage crisis and never-ending guerrilla activities in Peru. First, as MRTA argues, the causes may be attributed to two significant factors: the chronic, serious gap between the rich and the poor and the accumulated anti-Japan sentiment prevailing among some of the Peruvian people. Shortly after its occupation of the Japanese ambassador's residence, MRTA announced statements several times in the name of the Revolutionary Movement Committee through the Internet. In its statements, MRTA presented four conditions: modification of economic policies for national welfare; release of all MRTA members in prison; payment of war taxes[29]; and guarantee of a safe withdrawal route to the central jungle area for arrested guerrillas. MRTA also revealed that it ''decided to occupy the Japanese ambassador's residence as a protest against the Japanese government's protection of the Hujimori administration, which, it alleges, is implementing economic policies in violation of human rights and neglecting most grass-root voices.''[30] As MRTA argues, the Peruvian people's resistance to or hostility against increasing Japanese influence since the departure of Hujimori government and the rich-poor gap existing

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despite the favorable, apparent results of economic policies can be seen as the direct, visual causes of the recent hostage crisis.

Above all, the severity of the rich-poor gap in Peru is beyond tolerance. Since the inauguration of President Hujimori, bold economic reforms have been pursued through privatization and liberalization. Consequently, the Peruvian economy could escape from its critical situation, represented by inflation of many hundred or thousand percent in the 1980s and foreign debts whose return looked impossible, and has come to a stable state. Despite these positive results of economic policies, so-called neo-liberalism, the unbalanced redistribution of wealth has become worse. The top 10% of the total population take over 90% of the gross national production, and real wages have decreased by 10% during the past 10 years. Only 10% of the active economic population lead a satisfactory living, 10% are unemployed and the remaining population are in half employment or underemployment. Currently, about half of the total Peruvian population live in absolute poverty.[31] Besides, the rate of unemployment is on the rise due to tightened budget resulting from recommendations and pressures by international banking institutions, like International Monetary Fund. This unemployment problem has some adverse effects on the popularity of President Hujimori. The comprehensive economic hardship has been alleviated since the late 1980s, but the concentration of wealth in a certain class has not been corrected at all.

MRTA blames the government's poor economic policies for the lopsided economy and asserts that it will bring about a world full of roses without thorns (un mundo de rosas sin espinas).[32] The co-existence of ''Lima's Peru,'' for a few upper-class people, and ''Andes's Peru,'' for those in isolation and poverty, is a good excuse for anti-government guerrilla activities. Additionally, President Hujimori, a Japanese-Peruvian belonging to the 1.5th immigration generation, has exerted efforts to attract Japanese funds since coming into office. However, capitalists and the middle class have criticized his efforts for fear of economic dependency on Japan. Even the grass roots feel uneasy to accept Hujimori as President because he is from a minority immigration group, and are very upset with his efforts to bring Japanese influence to Peru. Of the groups who wanted an economic stability through economic cooperation with Japan at the start of the Hujimori government, there are some, though small in size, who have come to harbor anti-Japan sentiment.

MRTA argued, ''Japan, like the U.S. [imperialism], supports President Hujimori because it wants to use him as a bridgehead in extending its influence in Latin America. As the Japanese government is in competition with the U.S. in Peru, it helps Hujimori government's 'dirty war'[33] in order to monopolize Hujimori administration's support.''[34] Besides, Hujimori administration's authoritarian attitude is also seen as a cause of the recent hostage crisis. Hujimori government has been implementing iron-fisted rules, including the suspension of constitution in 1992 under the pretext of achieving economic stability, and this has caused some people in Peru and other countries to call him a neo-authoritarian ruler. Its control of press is also a target of criticism. MRTA is criticizing the Peruvian government's oppression of the

press, asserting that 70 journalists are now in prison and the government is using terrorist means against anti-government newspapers and journalists.[35]

In June 1995, Hujimori pardoned, retroactive up to 1980, military and police officers serving their sentences in prison with such charges as a massacre of college students and an attempted coup, and those responsible for assassinations of Acosmarca and Pucayacu, by using his presidential power. This retroactive pardon was strongly criticized by the International Amnesty Committee and domestic and foreign human rights organizations. Last summer, Hujimori was elected president for the third term which is prohibited by the constitution, by interpreting the provisions in his favor. This caused members of the opposition party and anti-government guerrilla groups to be opposed to him even harder.[36]

While such economic, political complaints were on the rise, anti-government organizations that had been weakened by Hujimori administration's heavy crackdown operations are seeking a chance to recover their power. This was an indirect cause of the recent hostage crisis. MRTA also sees the recent hostage crisis as a chance to restructure its organization and show off its power. As one of the alternatives to resolve the situation, a proposition to give legitimacy to MRTA has emerged. For this idea, two opposing views are being discussed. One view sees that MRTA chose the recent hostage crisis as a route to obtain its legitimacy because it judged that it could not further maintain and develop guerrilla warfares under the current situations. This view is mainly supported by the groups seeing the recent hostage crisis negatively in the same way as they see anti-government labor movements, including those carried out by the ''Peruvian Laborers Movements (POP).''[37] The other view in support of MRTA's legitimacy is quite persuasive in view of previous examples in Guatemala and other Latin American countries. However, this view takes the position that incorporation of MRTA guerrillas into regular political circle is unrealistic in consideration of MRTA's ideologies and lines and Hujimori administration's attitude to and understanding of MRTA.

The very first prospect about the recent hostage crisis in Peru was unclear, and the likelihood of using force for solution was not so high. As it revealed in its statements, MRTA displayed its willingness to carry out discussions and negotiations. In the 6th statement, MRTA argued that the recent hostage taking was perpetrated for political and not for military purposes, taking the act of releasing old and weak people as an example. The family backgrounds of core members of MRTA, its past terrorist acts and released hostages' testimony well backed up the possibility of non-violent solutions. It is obvious that MRTA is a guerrilla group not unwilling to murder to achieve its goals, but the possibility of using its force was not significantly high by looking at the development of the recent hostage crisis. Moreover, the Catholic church's attempts to mediate through direct and indirect channels also increased the chances of peaceful resolution of the hostage crisis. These efforts provided the expectation that the case would not be so aggravated as to invite armed intervention, and Hujimori administration did not look to take immoderate meas-

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ures. Above all, the Japanese government opposed to armed intervention, and the domestic political situations had not so deteriorated as to force Hujimori to take an extreme measure. Although Sendero Luminoso resumed its intermittent terrorist acts after a pause, its collaboration with MRTA looked unlikely.

However, external factors could function as important variables in settling the hostage crisis. The U.S., which can exercise a decisive influence on Latin America's foreign relations, publicly claimed its absolutely negative position for any negotiations with terrorists shortly after MRTA's attack. After repeated reviews of this case in terms of diplomatic relations, however, it looked like the U.S. was seeing the exile of guerrillas to a third country as a feasible solution. Other Latin American and western countries were involved in mediating the two parties. Cuba, the only Latin American country completely free from the U.S. interference or influence, once suggested providing an exile place for MRTA. In view of this, Cuba's mediation could have been expected if it had been given a chance.[38] However, the expectation of non-violent settlement could be possible only under the condition that there would not be a sudden emergence of any internal or external new variables likely to affect the settlement. If MRTA took adventurous actions because the Peruvian government's attitude was too rigid and the negotiation efforts were brought to a stalemate, or if hard-liners in Japan or the U.S. took firmer attitudes, the settlement efforts could have entered into an unexpected phase. However, Hujimori government sneakingly went forward with its rescue plan and carried out its mission successfully. It is now anticipated that MRTA would enter into a latent phase.

Conclusion

Formation and emergence of Latin American guerrilla movements, including Peruvian movements, are attributed to political, economic contradictions. Such movements were more dynamically expanded after the success of the Cuban revolution. In Latin America, economic unbalance (like the continuous concentration of wealth in a certain class and deteriorating poverty in others), political injustice (like the ruling system monopolized by a few people) and no response to needs for a change coexisted. The formation of the Castro system, which emerged as an alternative for Latin America to cope with poverty and underdevelopment, was great enough to encourage young leftist warriors to dream of the second Cuba.

MRTA was also born out of the structural limitations of Peruvian politics and economy, and historical, ideological background unique to Peru. MRTA adopts Marx-Leninism as its ideological principle and guerrilla tactics for its organization and activities. Most Latin American guerrilla groups could not expand their influence because of governments of Latin American countries, whose policies had to be in step with the U.S. security policies (whether voluntarily or involuntarily) regarding the formation of a non-capitalist system as a challenge to the continental security.

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Likewise, MRTA's activities shrank in the 1990s due to domestic and foreign environmental changes. In addition, the Hujimori government system, looking like an exquisite assembly of nationalism and authoritarianism, further limited the range of MRTA's activities. Peruvian authorities even affirmed that their counter-guerrilla operations had reduced the foundation of anti-government organizations powerless. However, MRTA's hostage taking in the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima showed that Peru is still divided into two parts — ''Andes's Peru'' and ''Lima's Peru'' — which can be the cause of repeated emergence of leftist guerrilla groups. The hostage crisis further warns that reforms and policies enacted by the Peruvian government should be aimed at political, economic equality and fairness. Otherwise, such reforms and policies may end up in surgical operations, temporarily covering up the locuses of diseases. The result of the recent hostage crisis left lessons that the construction of a bridge connecting Lima and Andes, presently standing at opposing ends, is the first task to undertake, and that directions and limitations of guerrilla movements, including MRTA, in Peru depend on how strongly the bridge is constructed.

NOTES

1. According to the ''96 Trend of International Terrorism'' published by the NSA in Feb. 1997, a total of 36 terrorist acts occurred in 1996 in North America and Latin America: 14 in Columbia, 6 in the U.S., 3 in Peru, 3 in Guatemala, 1 in Canada, 1 in Nicaragua, 1 in Mexico, 1 in Chile, 1 in El Salvador, 1 in Brazil and 1 in other place.
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